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AUTHOR	Witthuhn, Burton O.
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ABSTRACT

Third in the elementary set of teacher-developed instructional activities for teaching geography, this activity investigates spatial allocation through discussion and observation of classroom arrangements. Classroom space allocated for the teacher's desk, aisles, study area, and trash cans illustrates real-world locational concepts of geography such as zoning, traffic flows, and environment. It is hoped that, for example, students correlate playing in the aisles between desks with playing in the streets of a city. Exemplary charts and maps are provided to show physical relationships between the classroom world and the real world. See SO 009 140 for a general description and explanation of the elementary and secondary sets comprising this series. (ND)

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WHY CAN'T I PLAY HERE?

THE CLASSROOM: A WORLD IN MINIATURE

by

Dr. Burton O. Witthuhn
Department of Geography, Edinboro State College
Edinboro, Pennsylvania

Classrooms are space-activity organizers. How valid are student perceptions of space allocations? How useful is the classroom for examining real-world, locational allocations? Do we live in a world of learned order? Comparison of student planned classroom arrangements and real world patterns provides some answers for these questions. Moreover, students will know why thay can't play here -- obviously no guarantee they will not choose to do so anyway.

The classroom is a space-activity organizer. There are places to sit, to play, to read, to work on projects, to keep pets, to place rubbish, to walk, to hang clothing and to store books and things. By examining the allocation of classroom space, especially when allocated under student direction, one soon discovers that spatial preferences are fixed much earlier than is commonly realized. The similarity of locational choices prescribed by children and patterns existing in the real world are highly correlated.

The role of the teacher as the administrator of power and justice is not without its spatial implications. Should the teacher's desk be placed on the edge of the room or in the center? If preference is given to an area for playing rather than for studying, what effects will that have upon discipline and order? If desks are separated and bolted to the floor, where is the logical playground? How does playing in the aisles parallel playing in the streets of an inner city area? Will inner-city children order their classroom to match the world they live in? How will the urban child order this space differently from the rural child--if at all?

SO 009 141

Classroom arrangements provide a convenient way for introducing students to zoning (spatial segregation), planned congestion and overcrowding, resource limitations, environmental quality, traffic flows, and similar concerns. Charts and maps summarize the realities of man-imposed order making abstractions into concrete examples. (It is expected that the teacher will convert the reproduced materials into transparencies for classroom use.)

Why can't I play here--because you are standing in the middle of the

reading area, that's why.

VOCABULARY FOR SPATIAL ALLOCATION ACTIVITY

CLASSROOM	CITY
STUDENT DESK	RESIDENTIAL BLOCK
TEACHER DESK	STORIES
STORAGE	CITY HALL
AISLE	ZOO
READING AREA	SUBURB HOUSING
PLAY AREA	STREET
PET AREA	HIGHWAY
WORK AREA	PLAYGROUND
DISPOSAL AREA	PARK
LIBRARY	DUMP
NATURE DISPLAY	GASOLINE STATION
ROCK DISPLAY	MUSEUM

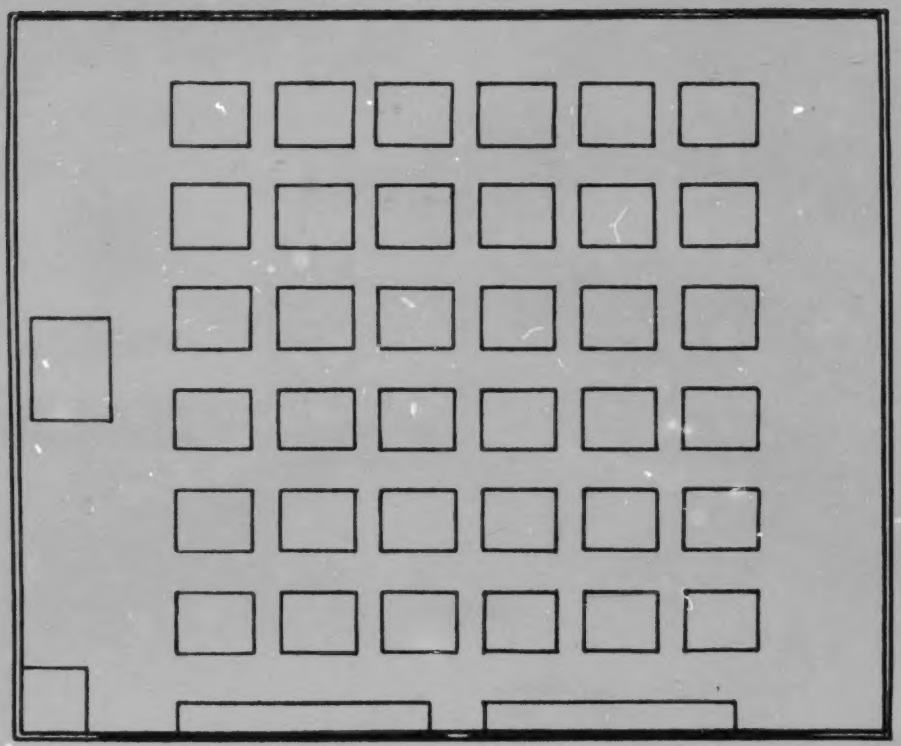

FIGURE 1 CLASSROOM WORLD - CASE I

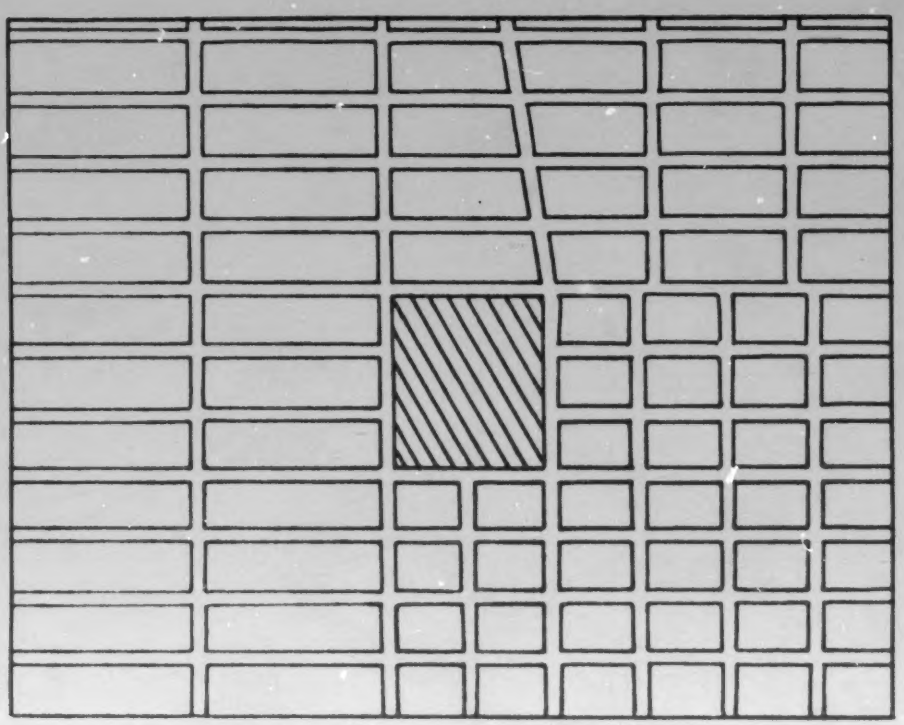

FIGURE 2 REAL WORLD-CASE I

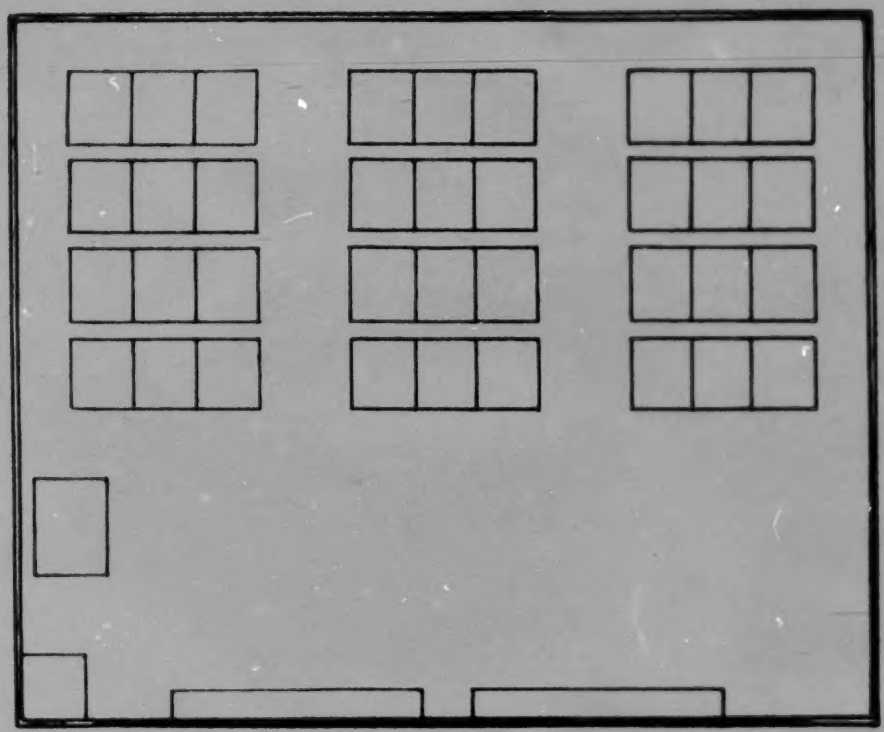

FIGURE 3 CLASSROOM WORLD - CASE II

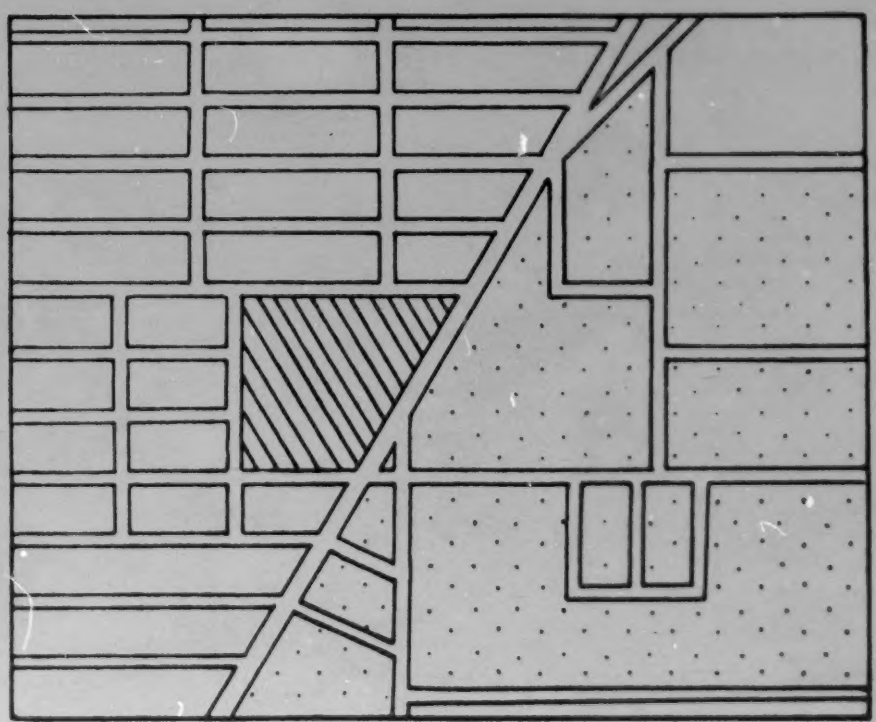

FIGURE 4 REAL WORLD - CASE II

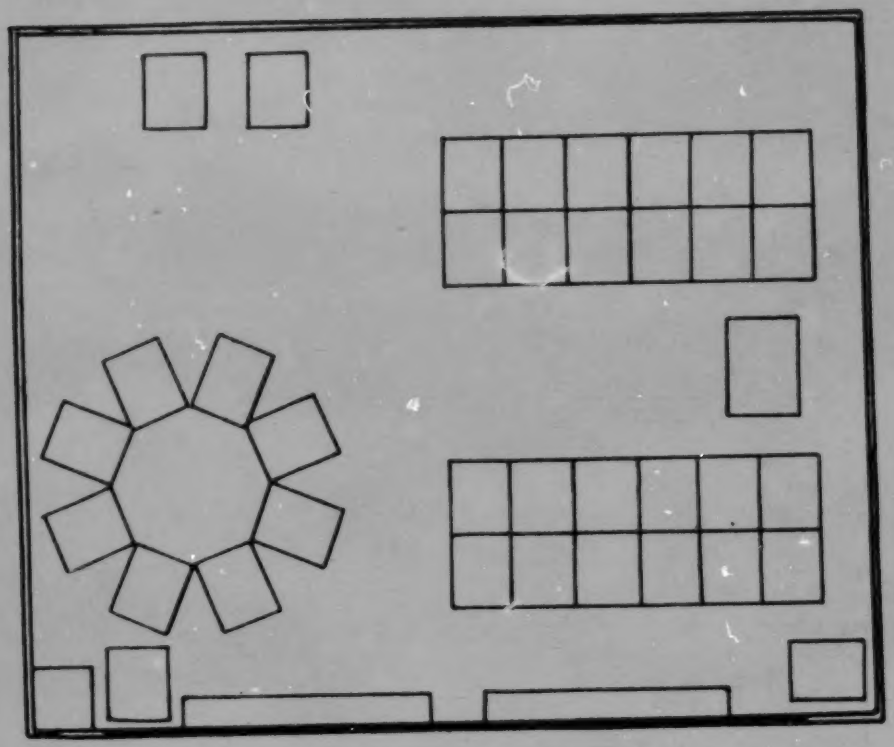

FIGURE 5 CLASSROOM WORLD - CASE III

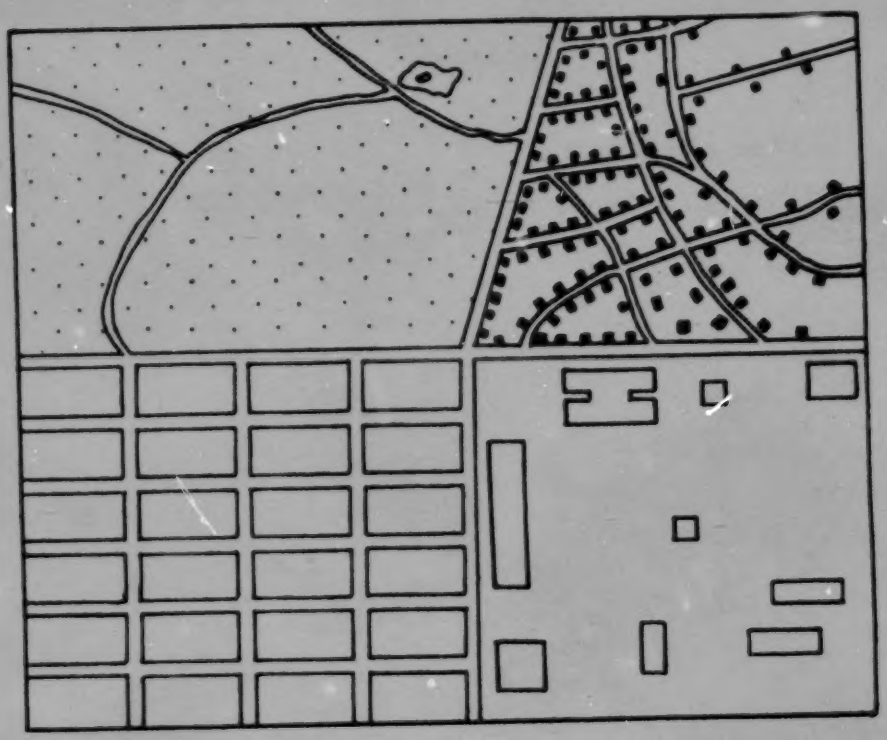

FIGURE 6 REAL WORLD - CASE III